World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention of World Health Organization in 2004, *inter-alia*, have indicated that without increased efforts and new initiatives, the total number of road traffic deaths worldwide and injuries is forecast to rise by some 65% between 2000 and 2020 and in low income and middle income countries deaths are expected to increase as much as 80%.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) The Working Group set up by Planning Commission in the year 2000 chaired by Shri Prakash Narain, Former Chairman, Railway Board had assessed the social cost of road accidents in the country in the year 1999-2000 at Rs. 55,000 crores.

Conversion of NHs into double lane in North-Eastern Region

1733. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any policy to convert all National Highways into double lane in the North-Eastern Region;

(b) if so, NH-53 Silchar-Jiriban Section and NH-54 Silchar-Lailapur Section are to be converted in to double lane under the SARDP; and

(c) by when these works would start to convert the above NHs into double lane?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Conversion of National Highways to double lane standard is taken up depending upon availability of funds and *inter-se* priority of works.

(b) The Silchar-Jiriban section of NH-53 and Silchar-Lailapur section of NH-54 in the State of Assam are included for double laning under Phase A of Special Accelerated Road Development Programme for North-Eastern Region (SARDP-NE).

(c) Detailed Project Reports and cost estimates are under preparation by Border Roads Organisation. It is therefore, too early to indicate date of start of conversion into double lane.